

Environmental variables and Academic Performance of Undergraduates in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

Ayobami A. OYEDEJI

*Department of Educational Foundations,
Federal College of Education, Iwo, Osun State, Nigeria
oyedejiaa@fceiwo.edu.ng*

&

Olawumi E. TEMISANREN

*Department of Educational Foundations,
Federal College of Education, Iwo, Osun State, Nigeria
temisanrenoe@fceiwo.edu.ng*

Abstract

The Academic Performance (AP) of undergraduates has been a subject of concern among stakeholders from different areas of academic disciplines. However, an insufficient number of studies have been conducted in Nigerian universities. This study was conducted to fill this noticeable lacuna. The study, therefore, investigated environmental variables (Physical Facilities-PFs, Peer Group-PG, Information and Communication Technology-ICT) and AP among undergraduates in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, using a descriptive survey design of correlational type. The population of this study comprised 2205 students in ten departments in the Faculty of Education. The purposive sample technique was used to select six departments, while the proportionate size sampling technique was used to select 40% of students from each department, totaling 448 respondents, constituting the sample size. A questionnaire was designed by the researchers for data collection. Descriptive statistics were used to answer three research questions, while Pearson's product-moment correlation was employed to test the hypothesis. The findings from the study showed that the level of AP was relatively low. The status of PFs was quite high. The relationship exists among ICT, PG, PFs, and AP in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Efforts should be put in place by the management of the university to sustain and maintain undergraduates' academic performance. University management should provide physical facilities that would enhance teaching and learning. More education should be provided on how to use ICT.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Environmental Variables, Physical Facilities, Peer Group, ICT

Introduction

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs: polytechnics, colleges of education, universities, among others) have no worth without students. Students are the most important assets of any educational setting. This implies that without students, HEIs cannot exist, and employment of manpower is not guaranteed. The social and economic development of the any nation is directly linked to student academic performance. Undergraduates' success in the HEIs largely depends on their academic performance. Hence, academic performance is important in producing the best quality graduates who will become great leaders and manpower for the country (Oyedeji and Olatunbosun, 2022). However, poor academic performance seems to be rampant among Nigerian university undergraduates. Atanda (2020) reported that students in external examinations fall below the expectations of stakeholders. This problem has been a major concern to educational planners, administrators, lecturers, parents, and students.

Lilian, and Nwobodo (2024) and Ogunbodede (2022) stated that academic performance among undergraduates has been a source of worry to educators, teachers, educational administrators, educational managers, and government officials at all levels. Though many measures have been taken over the years to improve the situation, a large number of undergraduates still perform poorly across the tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Pitan (2015) confirmed that 39 students of Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida University, Lapai, have been expelled from the institution due to failure to meet the minimum academic requirement after two academic sessions on probation. In 2014, the Senate of the University of Ibadan, as contained in the bulletin issued by the institution's directorate of public commission in 2014, withdrew 78 students due to poor academic performance. The University disclosed that the affected students were drawn from 13 faculties for failure to obtain the minimum academic requirement at the end of the 2012/2013 session. Likewise, a total of 44 students from various faculties were withdrawn from the Federal University of Technology, Minna, over poor academic performance and examination malpractice (Vanguard newspaper, 2017). In the 2016 session, 408 newly admitted students were sent out of the University of Ibadan for poor academic performance (Punch newspaper, 2018). This implies that failure to meet academic requirements at the end of the academic session could lead to the withdrawal of students from the university. The low academic performance among undergraduate cuts across Nigerian universities, and the University of Ibadan is no exception. Based on these

pieces of evidence, low performance could be due to the poor academic environment where undergraduates are learning.

Undergraduates are students who undergo training and offer courses in their area of specialization or discipline in the university. Every undergraduate is expected to succeed in their academic endeavours. Academic performance is the extent to which an undergraduate has attained a short- or long-term educational goal. Academic performance can be defined as the extent to which an institution, a teacher, or a student achieves long- or short-term educational goals, and the academic performance is usually measured by continuous assessments and overall Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) achieved by the student (Al-Tameemi, Johnson, Gitay, Abdel-Salam, Al-Hazaa, BenSaid, and Romanowski, 2023). In this study, the CGPA of undergraduates will be used to measure academic performance. Reports show that undergraduates with good academic records usually have better employment opportunities, higher income, more professional development and advancement opportunities, and better employment benefits (Tentama, and Abdillah, 2019). Academic performance determines whether an undergraduate is considered to move to the next level or not. It determines whether the student is successful or not in their chosen career. Academic performance is also very important for the successful physical, social, psychological, mental development of students and better integration into society. In Nigeria, academic excellence, qualifications, and high performance have been regarded as the parameters for recurrent placement and advancement in both the public and private sectors (Lilian, and Nwobodo, 2024).

Observation shows that some disciplines in the university appear to be so difficult that only the very brilliant ones can excel. Academic performance among undergraduates is evaluated at educational institutions through a variety of methods, including classroom performance, class assignments, tests, group seminars, examinations, and more (Ogunbodede and Oribhabor, 2022). However, the complexities that surround the environment where teaching and learning take place in the area of provision of adequate facilities and resources have made the efforts of the government unnoticeable. skyrocketing enrolments, workload, dilapidated buildings, ill-equipped library and worn-out laboratory equipment seem to make universities record low undergraduates' academic performance. Environment is made up of both physical and social components. Environment is sum total of water, air and land interrelationships among themselves and also with

the human being, other living organisms and property. It includes all the physical and biological surrounding and their interactions (Zubairu, Usman, Gana, Abubakar and Yahaya, 2025). Therefore, university environment is of paramount importance in shaping and reshaping intellectual ability. The university environment is expected to be enriched with enough learning facilities and favourable climate that would make undergraduates more comfortable to learn and pay attention to their academic activities which result to high academic performance of undergraduates.

The school environment has wider impact on students' learning and growth, including a considerable area of their social, emotional and ethical improvement. When students find their school environment helpful and loving, they are less likely to become involved in substance misuse, sadism and other problem behaviour. These terms are used interchangeably here to refer to students' sense of being in a close, respectful relationship with peers and adult at school (Abe and Oludare, 2024). High academic performance of undergraduates may not be attained without good environmental variables. Imeokparia (2018) identified school location, school type, and facilities as environmental influences that affect the performance of students. Likewise, Pitan (2015) identified home environment, noise/home surroundings, peer group influence, and parental educational background. However, physical facilities, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and peer group will be used to measure environmental influence.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is one of the environmental influences that is capable of improving the academic performance of undergraduates. The application of ICT in education has improved teaching and learning. Students with diverse learning styles can maximize their learning potential when teachers use ICT to support their teaching. The ICT makes it possible to deliver virtual instruction to undergraduates outside the lecture room (Effiom, Godwin, Ojedor, Gabriel and Godwin, 2023). It helps undergraduate master materials and skills, though it depends on the lecturer's instructional goal, students' levels, instructional needs, and available resources. Undergraduates need to be equipped with skills to use ICT if they are to record academic excellence.

Physical facilities are another indicator of environmental influence that may determine the academic performance of undergraduates at the University of Ibadan. Asiyai (2016) defined physical facilities as the entire school plant or educational facilities such as classrooms,

staffroom, laboratories, library, audio-visual aids, electricity, water, desks, chairs, tables, storage space, and others, which teachers may need for achieving the desired objective. Nsa, Offiong, Udo, and Ikot (2014) reported that there was a significant relationship between the availability of laboratory facilities, farming facilities, and students' performance. Facilities have a way of reducing abstract concepts into concrete forms. That is, with facilities on the ground, undergraduates may find it easy to assimilate lecture teachings, and it has a tendency to enhance the academic performance of the undergraduates (Imeokparia, 2018).

Akomolafe (2016) showed that there was a significant relationship among physical facilities, students' level of motivation, and academic performance. Good modern physical facilities in school could add significantly to the promotion of academic performance. Environmental variable like the provision of physical facilities, remains a serious problem in the University. Undergraduates at times, receives lectures and read under the most unsafe and unhealthy conditions, like outdated libraries, broken furniture, among others. If this is happening in the university system, this may be tantamount to the academic failure of undergraduates. Koroye (2016) found that the aesthetic beauty of the school and its infrastructural facilities significantly influence students' academic performance. Students' academic performance may not be achieved if the necessary physical facilities are not in good shape.

Omotere (2013) stated that poor school facilities, large class sizes, inappropriate school locations, and poor school plant planning negatively affect students' academic performance. According to this researcher, the building, furniture, and equipment contribute remarkably to the academic performance of students. When undergraduates are overcrowded, this will disrupt the undergraduates' mental activities and the situation that generally hinders effective teaching and intellectual development of the students. Furthermore, for high academic performance of undergraduates, well-equipped laboratories, library, furniture, and internet facilities are needed and sacrosanct. Onyebuenyi, Onovo, and Njoku (2022) reported that the library as a physical school facility has a great impact on the students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in the Aba Education Zone.

Peer group is another indicator of measuring environmental variables that is capable of determining the academic performance of undergraduates. Peer group plays an important role in the academic performance of undergraduates. Peer groups are social groups that influence the

behaviour of their members. It is the association of people within the same age grade. According to Pitan (2015), the peer group is the first socializing unit outside the home, and friends could come from different age groups, social backgrounds, and family backgrounds with varied interests. Students' interactions with their peers could help and enhance their capability and increase their academic performance in school because they could seek help from their peers, which could serve as a motivation rather than working alone (John-Nelson, 2020).

Akpan (2019) found that there was a significant influence of class size, instructional facilities, peer relationships, and school location on the academic performance of SS 11 students in Biology in the Ukanafun Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. However, previous studies (Aneke and Akpusugh, 2022; Imeokparia, 2018; Mudassir, Norsuhaily, and Ado, 2015; and Koroye, 2016) on students' academic performance mostly considered learning environment, environmental factors, school environment, and school physical environment in secondary schools in different geographical areas. None of these studies worked on the environmental variables on the academic performance of undergraduates in higher education institutions, particularly in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The study, therefore, examined the environmental variables on academic performance among undergraduates in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Statement of Problem

The academic performance of undergraduates is the main priority of any university. The ability to achieve academic excellence makes a university world-class and recognized institution. There is a growing assumption that academic performance among undergraduates at the University of Ibadan is deteriorating. This declining performance could be observed where 408 students of the University of Ibadan were expelled due to low GPA. One may begin to wonder if this mass failure rate of the students is not a reflection of environmental variables such as ICT, physical facilities, peer group influence, and home environment, among others. If low academic performance among undergraduates is not addressed by the stakeholders, Nigerian graduates may not be able to compete with their counterparts globally after graduation. Even though the student could be advised to withdraw from the university every year, which will eventually lead to social vices such as political violence, army robbery, among others in the society. It is based on this

background that this study examined environmental variables and academic performance among undergraduates in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to examine environmental variables and academic performance among undergraduates in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated the level of academic performance among undergraduates, examined the status of physical facilities and find out the relationship between environmental variables and academic performance among undergraduates in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What is the level of academic performance among undergraduates in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria?
2. What is the status of physical facilities in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was formulated in the process of carrying out this study:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between environmental variables and academic performance among undergraduates in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey research design was employed for this study. The population of this study comprised 2205 students in ten departments (Educational Management (EME)- 227; Special Education (SPED)-164; Library Archival and Information (LARIS)-201; Human Kinetics (HK)- 112; Counseling and Human Developments (CHDs)- 222, Adult Education (ADE)- 194; Health Education (HE)- 124); Arts and Social Sciences Education (ASSE)- 647; Early Childhood

Educational Foundations (ECEP)-89 and Science and Technology Education (STE)- 225 in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria (Source: Nigerian Universities Education Students' Association (NUESA), Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, 2025). A purposive sample technique was used to select 448 students in six departments (EME-227; SPED-164; LARIS-201; KH-112; CHDs-222, and ADE-194) in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. These departments were chosen because they are old enough in the faculty to provide adequate information about the variables in the study. Proportionate size to sampling technique was used to select 40% of students from each department. These sampled departments were EME-91; SPED-66; LARIS-80; KHE-45; CHDs-89 and ADE-78. However, 367 copies of the instruments were successfully filled, useful, and returned for data analysis.

The instrument was a questionnaire. The questionnaire has two sections, 'A' and 'B'. Section A comprised items that seek personal information about the respondents and student academic performance, such as sex, level of study, marital status, age, department, and Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). Section B focused on Environmental variables with sub-scales of ICT, physical facilities, and peer group. Physical facilities had 8 items while ICT had 7 items with the following rating scale of E- Excellent (5), VG- Very Good (4), G- Good (3), F- Fair (2), P- Poor (1). Peer group had 7 items with the following Likert scale: VH-Very High (5), H-High (4), A-Average (3), L-Low (2), VL-Very Low (1). The research instrument was validated using face, content, and construct validation by the experts in the Department of Educational Management, University of Ibadan. The corrected copy questionnaire was administered to respondents. The reliability Cronbach's coefficient of 0.89 and 0.81 was found for internal consistency of ICT and peer group. Descriptive statistics of simple percentage, frequency count, mean and standard deviation was used to answer all research questions while inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation was employed to test hypothesis formulated at a 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Answering Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the level of academic performance among undergraduates in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria?

Table 1: The Level of Academic Performance among Undergraduates

	Frequency	Percent
Low	201	54.8
Average	60	16.3
High	106	28.9
Total	367	100.0

Key: High- 5.00-3.50, Average-3.49-2.50, below 2.50

The Table 1 presents the level of academic performance among undergraduates in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan using Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA), the result reveals that 201 (54.8) of the undergraduates had low academic performance, 60 (16.3) respondents were on average performance while 166 (45.2) had high performance across the departments sampled. Based on this result, the level of academic performance among undergraduates in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria was relatively low.

Research Question 2: What is the status of physical facilities in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria?

Table 2: Status of physical facilities

S/N	Statements	E	VG	G	F	P	MEAN ($\bar{x}$)	Std D
1	Lecture room	26 (7.1)	79 (21.5)	172 (46.9)	70 (19.1)	20 (5.4)	3.06	0.95
2	School building	31 (8.4)	75 (20.4)	171 (46.6)	75 (20.4)	15 (4.1)	3.09	0.95
3	Staff offices	27 (7.4)	68 (18.5)	165 (45.0)	78 (21.3)	29 (7.9)	2.96	1.00
4	Laboratories	23 (6.3)	60 (16.4)	156 (42.5)	88 (24.0)	40 (10.9)	2.83	1.03
5	Libraries	29 (7.9)	73 (19.9)	139 (37.9)	85 (23.2)	41 (11.2)	2.63	1.09
6	Students recreational facilities	20 (5.4)	56 (15.3)	118 (32.2)	114 (31.1)	59 (16.1)	2.66	1.00

7	Furniture	10 (2.7)	60 (61.3)	146 (39.8)	97 (26.4)	54 (14.7)	3.23	1.01
8	Large Theatre (LT) Hall	14 (3.8)	60 (16.3)	135 (36.8)	91 (24.8)	67 (18.3)	2.63	1.08
Grand mean		2.89						

Note: Excellent (E)= 5, Very Good (VG)=4, Good (G)=3, Fair (F)=2, Poor(P)=1. grand mean score of 0 ≈ 1.4-poor; 1.5 ≈ 2.4- fair, 2.5≈ 3.4- good, 3.5≈ 4.4- very good, f 4.5 ≈ 5.0-excellent

Table 2 presents the result of the status of physical facilities in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. All the items on the Table were rated to be good, with the highest frequency and percentage. For instance, lecture room ($\bar{x}$ =3.06); school building ($\bar{x}$ = 3.09); staff offices ($\bar{x}$ =2.96); laboratories ($\bar{x}$ =2.83); libraries ($\bar{x}$ =2.63); students recreational facilities ($\bar{x}$ =2.66); furniture ($\bar{x}$ =3.23) and large theatre hall ($\bar{x}$ =2.63). However, five of the mean values were rated below the threshold of 3.0, showing that the status of physical facilities was good, which can be interpreted as high. It therefore follows that the status of physical facilities in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria was quite high as perceived by students when considering the criteria mean for deciding on the Table 2.

Testing of the Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between environmental variables and academic performance among undergraduates in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Table 3: Correlational Matrix of the Predictor Variables

Variables	academic performance	ICT	peer group	physical facilities
academic performance	1.00			
ICT	0.128** 0.007	1.00		
peer group	0.173** 0.000	0.380** 0.000	1.00	
physical facilities	0.169 0.001**	0.659 0.000**	0.220 0.000**	1.00

**denotes significant at $p < 0.05$ level of significant

Table 3 indicates that there are positive significant relationships among ICT ($r = 0.128$; $p < 0.05$), peer group ($r = 0.173$; $p < 0.05$), and physical facilities ($r = 0.169$; $p < 0.05$) to academic performance among undergraduates. This indicates that the relationship exists among ICT, peer group, physical

facilities, and the academic performance of undergraduates in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The level of academic performance among undergraduates in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, was low. The result of this study is in line with the findings of Adepoju, (2016) who indicated that the low academic performance of undergraduates is a serious problem that hinders the future of the nation. The result is similar to the submission of Atanda (2020), who reported that students in external examinations fall below the expectation of stakeholders. Likewise, the finding of this study agrees with statements made by Lilian and Nwobodo (2024), and Ogunbodede and Oribhabor (2022) who observed that a large number of undergraduates perform poorly in their examinations.

The status of physical facilities in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria was quite high as perceived by students when considering the criteria mean for deciding on the Table 2. The result of this study is against the findings of Omotere (2013), who confirmed that poor school facilities, large class size, inappropriate school location, and poor school plant planning negatively affect students' academic performance.

The result shows that a relationship exists among ICT, peer group, physical facilities, and the academic performance of undergraduates in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. This finding is consistent with findings of Akpan (2019), who revealed that there was a significant influence of class size, instructional facilities, peer relationships, and school location on the academic performance of SS 11 students in Biology in the Ukanafun Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The result of this study is also in line with Akomolafe (2016), who showed that there was a significant relationship among physical facilities, students' level of motivation, and academic performance. Likewise, the result supports the result of Nsa, Offiong, Udo, and Ikot (2014), who indicated that there was a significant relationship among the availability of laboratory facilities, farming facilities, and students' performance. Similarly, the finding of this study is tantamount to the result of Onyebuenyi, Onovo, Ewe, and Njoku (2022), who revealed that a library as a physical school facility has a great impact on the students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in the Aba Education Zone. Interestingly, the submission of this study

against the finding of Imeokparia, (2018), that there was no significant relationship among school location, school type and students' academic performance in Business Studies. The result of this study negates the submission of Koroye (2016), who revealed that the aesthetic beauty of the school and infrastructural facilities significantly influences students' academic performance.

Conclusion

This study can conclude that the level of academic performance among undergraduates at the University of Ibadan was relatively high. The study also concluded that the status of physical facilities in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, was quite good. The study established that ICT, peer group and physical facilities play important role in attaining academic performance among undergraduates in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Efforts should be put in place by the management of the university to sustain and maintain the academic performance of undergraduates in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan. Management of the institution should also meet undergraduates from time to time for counseling and guidance on their performance. Students should be encouraged and advised to use ICT for learning activities on daily basis. University management should also provide physical facilities that would enhance teaching and learning. Physical facilities like lecture rooms, school buildings, staff offices, laboratories, and libraries should be in good shape from time to time to sustain academic performance of undergraduates in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan.

Ethical considerations

The ethical issues were considered during the data collection. The participants were duly informed and briefed about the purpose of the study before the instrument was administered. The letter seeking permission for data collection was taken to the sampled university before students participated in the study. No ethical and logical consideration issues were violated during this study.

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